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**PROPOSED CONGRESSIONAL CUTS TO EPA BUDGET
THREATEN NEW HAMPSHIRE CLEANUPS**

BOSTON -- The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced today that, in cities such as Nashua, dramatic cuts proposed for EPA's budget may slow, stop, and even prevent cleanup of hazardous waste sites.

Prior to summer recess, the House passed a budget for fiscal year 1996 which would cut EPA's resources by 34%. Last week, a Senate panel proposed a 23% cut. Although they differ slightly in how they would affect specific cleanups, both the House and Senate proposals would cut Superfund by 36% (\$560 million). These reductions would significantly weaken the agency's ability to conduct cleanups at contaminated sites.

At the Johns Manville Site, EPA Waste Management Director Linda Murphy stated, "We want New Hampshire residents to know what they're getting from EPA, so they'll know what they stand to lose."

The facility consists of two vacant warehouses on Bridge and Sanders Streets in Nashua, New Hampshire which have been abandoned since 1992. As a result of asbestos manufacturing that ended in 1985, sludge, baghouse dust, asbestos sheeting, PCB-contaminated oil, flammable liquids and other hazardous materials were left on the site. The buildings, in particular the roofs, are deteriorating. Sprinkler systems no longer function and water and electricity are cut-off. Trespassers have been common at the site, entering to salvage equipment. The residential neighborhood surrounding the site includes more than a dozen schools.

Nashua Mayor Rob Wagner stated, "This building is the City of Nashua's greatest environmental hazard. A fire here would result in the evacuation of a one-mile radius around the facility and a cleanup that would cost millions."

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Mayor Wagner added, "If EPA funding is cut, we lose the chance to continue the partnership we have established with EPA and the state to remediate this site. The City cannot proceed on this project alone. With EPA's help, however, we may be able to continue our work to remediate this extreme danger in our community."

The City of Nashua has condemned the building and has constructed a fence to restrict access. Nashua is also providing landfill space for disposal of asbestos from the site, and police and fire support. In the past, the City issued many orders against the property's owners requiring cleanup. Violation of these orders resulted in the involvement of the NH Department of Environmental Services. DES is coordinating removal of oil from 6 underground tanks and 4 vaults in early October.

Dr. Phillip J. O'Brien, Department of Environmental Services, Waste Management Director noted, "The state has been closely involved with the City and EPA at the Manville site, prioritizing steps in the removal action and providing coordination. This has been a very successful mutual effort to date." He added, "This is an important step in restoring the property to the City tax rolls."

EPA is in the process of removing immediate hazardous threats from the site using \$500,000 in funds from Superfund. Illegal stockpiles of 500 containers of paints and solvents and one transformer containing 630 gallons of PCB oil were removed. Eight capacitors containing PCB oil were also removed. To date, 140 cubic yards of friable asbestos waste has been removed from throughout the two buildings.

EPA's Murphy added, "We often work in partnership with officials who are closest to the problem so that we bring about local solutions. EPA does more than protect the environment - sites like this one diminish quality of life. Because funding is limited this year, and is expected to be tighter next year, Nashua officials are working with us to decide which elements of the cleanup should have the highest priority."

EPA is completing the first phase of cleanup at the site. Future cleanup will depend on regional cleanup priorities and future funding for EPA-New England.

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